ON A NEW TERAPON FROM THE STANTHORPE DISTRICT, SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND.

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TERAPON IDONEUS, *sp. nov.*

White's Perch.

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Depth of body equal to length of head, $3\frac{1}{2}$ in the total length Dorsal profile much more strongly arched than the abdominal. Upper profile of head obliquely linear, the snout somewhat pointed. Diameter of eye $5\frac{1}{8}$ in the length of the head and $1\frac{1}{2}$ in that of the snout. Interorbital region flat, its width $3\frac{3}{5}$ in the length of the head. Jaws equal. Maxillary extending to the vertical from the middle of the eye, its length $2\frac{3}{5}$ in that of the head, the width of its distal extremity $\frac{5}{8}$ of the diameter of the eye. No vomerine or palatine teeth. Preorbital indistinctly roughened posteriorly. Preopercle very finely serrated on and above the rounded angle, smooth below, with 9 or 10 series of small scales ; interopercle with 3 series. Opercle with a pair of strong bony prominences, which hardly constitute true spines, the lower much the larger. Free edge of the coracoid bone finely and evenly denticulated. Gill-rakers, 4 + 11, mostly tubercular, the longest but $\frac{2}{7}$ of the diameter of the eye. Dorsal fin low, originating well behind the base of the pectorals, the spines increasing in height to the 5th. and 6th., which are $2\frac{3}{5}$ in the length of the head and about equal to the longest soft ray ; first spine about half the length of the last, which is shorter than the penultimate and half

the height of the soft fin. Anal fin as long as its distance from the caudal; the 2nd. spine much stronger and a trifle longer than the 3rd., 4 in the length of the head. Outer borders of soft dorsal and anal fins convex. Caudal fin subtruncate or very feebly emarginate with the angles rounded, the outer rays $5\frac{1}{3}$ in the total length: caudal peduncle rather slender, its least depth $1\frac{1}{4}$ in its length behind the dorsal fin and $2\frac{3}{4}$ in the depth of the body. Pectoral fin rounded, with 15 rays, $7\frac{1}{5}$ in the total length. Ventral fins somewhat pointed, originating well behind and rather longer than the pectorals. $1\frac{3}{5}$ in the head, and not nearly reaching to the vent. Back blackish, washed with deep purple; sides grayish, each scale with a dusky border; under side of head, throat, and abdomen silvery white, slightly tinged with yellow. Dorsal, caudal, and pectoral fins with a greenish yellow wash; anal pale bluish, edged with white; ventrals white, tipped with yellow (*idoneus*, serviceable, suitable: that is, as food).

Length of type from tip of snout to end of middle caudal ray 238 millimeters.

Type in the Queensland Museum, Brisbane.

Upper Condamine River, Southern Queensland.

The type specimen of this handsome *Terapon* was brought to the Museum by Mr. D. O'Connor, who had received it from a correspondent at Stanthorpe. The example was almost immediately placed in my hands by Mr. de Vis for report thereon, with the result that I am, though reluctantly, constrained to consider it an undescribed species. I say "reluctantly" advisedly, because it seems to me that there are already an undue number of local species belonging to this genus described from the fresh waters of Queensland; nevertheless, as this fish differs considerably from all the forms hitherto recorded, I have no option but to give it a provisional name.

The nearest allies then of this new species are *Terapon truttaceus*[1], Macleay, from the Endeavour River and

(1) *Terapon truttaceus*, Macleay, Proc. Linn. Soc. N. S. Wales, v, 1881, p. 366: Endeavour River, Queensland.

T. longulus[2], Macleay, from "Fresh waters inland from Port Darwin." From the former it differs in the more slender body, the narrower interorbital space, the much larger mouth, the two opercular spines, the finely and evenly denticulated coracoid, the strength of the second anal spine, and the greenish yellow coloration of some of the fins. From the latter it differs in the more robust body and larger head, the wider interorbital space and longer and sharper snout, the feebler denticulation of the preopercle and the coracoid, the shape of the spinous dorsal, the strength of the second anal spine, and the coloration. The species also bears some resemblance to *T. elphinstoniensis*[3], de Vis, a lacustrine form from Lake Elphinstone[4], from which it differs in the rather larger scales, deeper body, larger head, nearly smooth preorbital, much wider gape, double-spined operculum, and finely denticulated coracoid.

Personally I was much pleased to obtain this specimen, since it has been the means of clearing up in part the mystery hanging round a fish of which I had previously received reports from various sources. The most circumstantial account given to me was by Mr. George Robinson and his father. These gentlemen tell me that about eighteen years ago when they were living on Gowrie Creek, near Toowoomba, after a heavy flood, the creek was found to be positively swarming with a fish which had been never previously known in that district. So plentiful and voracious were they that the very children could pull them out by the score of an afternoon, using as bait a small worm or piece of meat. It was particularly remarked that these fishes were never caught in the deeper pools, but were confined to the swift running streams where the water was barely sufficient to cover them, but being discolored they were invisible until hooked. The Messrs. Robinson, who, on being shown the Stanthorpe

(2) *Terapon longulus*, Macleay, l.c., p. 367; Fresh waters inland from Port Darwin, Northern Territory.

(3) *Terapon elphinstoniensis*, de Vis, Proc. Roy. Soc. Queensland, i, 1885, p. 57; Lake Elphinstone, Queensland.

(4) Lake Elphinstone is a muddy sheet of water about six miles long by two wide, lying landlocked between the watersheds of the Nebo and Suttor Rivers, inland from Mackay.

fish, at once recognised in it their old friend of Gowrie Creek, further told me that they rarely grew to a pound in weight, while some were but three inches long, the average being about midway between these two extremes. They added, too, that the fishes were most delicious eating. As Gowrie Creek takes its source from a swamp, it is plain that this incursion of fishes, which may be compared to the hordes of bush rats and mice which occasionally devastate our inland districts, had made their way up Gowrie Creek from the Condamine, into which it flows. Three months after their arrival, when many thousands had been captured without any appreciable diminution in their numbers, another flood came, and on its subsidence it was found that they had disappeared to the last fin as suddenly and mysteriously as they had come; nor, so far as I can ascertain, have they ever again appeared in that locality. It will be be very interesting, therefore, to note whether the arrival of this fish at Stanthorpe is the precursor of a sporadic invasion there similar to that which took place at Gowrie eighteen years ago.

The thanks of the community are due to Mr. White, of Pikedale, the collector of the specimen above described, who, on finding that the creek, in which they had so mysteriously appeared, was drying up owing to the prolonged drought, promptly set to work and caught as many individuals as possible, and transferred them to the main river. It is to be hoped that other gentlemen, when brought face to face with a similar problem to that which confronted Mr. White, will emulate his excellent example, and by acting with equal promptitude not only save the lives of scores of useful food fishes, but be the means of disseminating them over a wider area. No praise can be too great to offer to anyone, who, in this country where the great object of many of the inhabitants appears to be how most quickly and surely to exterminate the wonderful native fauna with which the land has been so richly endowed, expends time and money on such a cause, even though, putting utility aside, it be one of common humanity alone.